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TOUR UPDATE



The Newsletter of mikesworldtour

Tour Highlight:

November 2022
Granada, Spain



Tapas, Sunsets, and Cervezas Alhambra

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A QUICK HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, & SOCIAL OVERVIEW

Since I have already given an overview of Spain (see Barcelona stop 11) I am going to focus this solely on Granada. It is in the Andalusia province within Spain, and home to ~250,000 people. Between 1810 to 1812 the city was occupied by Napoleon during the Peninsular War. During the Spanish civil war from 1936-1939 Granada joined the Nationalists (Franco), but under Franco's rule, the city was one of the poorest areas in Spain. Today their economy has rebounded with the help of tourism. Recently, more people have been moving outside the main city into the surrounding metropolitan areas due to increasing home prices and cost of living within the city. Francisco Cuenca has been the mayor of Granada since 2021.

Granada, Spain



Some quick tips for Granada :

- Granada is very hilly so bring your walking shoes because you will be walking up a lot of hills
- Although it is in the south of Spain, in November it can be quite cold so bring a jacket

FOOD & DRINK

TAPAS



The municipality of Granada has this really cool rule that if you order drinks at a restaurant or bar then they are required to give you small bites of food called "tapas". Some restaurants let you choose which tapas that you would like while others just surprise you with a dish. Depending on how many drinks or bottles of wine you order determines the amount of tapas you get. This rule and law comes from a historical culture of Spain. In Spanish culture it is very normal to go to a bar and sit with your friends and family for hours having drinks together. The tapas tradition just naturally fit into this custom as people will have small bites of food rather than a large meal. The word tapas can also be used as a verb in the form of tapear which means going to a bunch of tapas restaurants.

Granada, Spain

EXPERIENCES

Granada is a very walkable city, and it is really easy to walk to each of the sights. There is a lot of history within Granada beyond the Alhambra, so make sure you save time to see the rest of the city. In each corner of the city you can see the Moorish influence in the building and churches. The main street in the city is Gran Vía, so if you ever get lost use that as your place marker!

CATHEDRAL



The cathedral in Granada was built a lot later (1518) than the rest of the cathedrals in Spain. It is in the old Muslim Medina and has some gothic elements. The main architect was Diego de Siloé who was following by a few other architects. In total it took 181 years to build it, and it would have been even larger but due to financial reasons they had to limit the size that it was going to be. Initially it was going to be a mausoleum for Charles I and Phillip II of Spain.

IGLESIA DE SAN PEDRO Y PABLO

This church is built at the foot of the Alhambra, and was built in 1559 on an older church that had previously collapsed. It was built from 1559 to 1567 (much shorter than the main cathedral) and the main architect was Juan de Maeda. It is built in the style of mudejar and renaissance representing the mix of moorish and European style. The word mudejar is an Arabic word that represents Muslims living in territory that had been conquered by the Christians. There is a huge bell on top of the church that goes off sporadically during the day. This church stands out in the middle of the city and is on the foreground of the Alhambra. The church represents the mixing of cultures within Grenada that can also be seen throughout the entire city.



MIRADOR DE SAN CRISTÓBAL AND SAN NICOLÁS



AYO get your walking shoes because if you want to see fantastic views of Granada and the surrounding areas there is no better place than the miradores within the city. The word mirador in Spanish translated to viewpoint in English. These viewpoints are on top of the hills on edges of the city providing expansive views of the city. I recommend going here for sunset one night to watch the sun set over the city. It is crazy how far you can see just from standing up here. Remember the reason the views are so good is because it is on top of a massive hill, so be prepared to be deeply out of breathe once you get up to the top of the mirador, but it is absolutely worth it!

ALBAICÍN



The albacín is a neighborhood in Granada that is full of streets where only pedestrians are allowed and shops on every corner. Its name comes from the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa where the inhabitants of Baeza settled outside the existing walls of the city. In the picture on the right you can see a corner you turn on the street. It was built in the form of a human elbow, and coming from the uphill puts the fighter in a better position to attack their enemy when turning the corner. The whole city was so meticulously built for defense and this is just one small example of it.

Granada, Spain

ALHAMBRA



Okay, I know, I saved the most obvious place for last. The Alhambra is a famous islamic palace and fortress. It is the best preserved Islamic palace and fortress in the Islamic world. It was built in 1238, and in 1492 became under the ownership of Ferdinand and Isabella. It was home to the last Moors fighting in Spain during the reconquista until they finally surrendered to the Spanish. Once the Spanish took over the palace and fortress was left in despair, and many squatters lived here for the time. It was rediscovered following the defeat of Napoleon I, and an influential person in the rediscovery was Washington Irving. His book Tales of the Alhambra written in 1832 brought more attention internationally back to the sight. Today there is a statue of him in the fortress recognizing his contribution. The fortress is massive and there are many palaces and buildings within it that you can see. I went here during sunset, and it was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. Today it is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Sight.

See You On the Next Stop on the Tour!